

## YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR SAFETY!

Natural areas present hazards. Rocks roll, trees topple, and limbs drop without warning. Wild animals, uneven ground, and changing weather can pose dangers. People may create other hazards through campfires, traffic, snowplay, and poor decisions.

Water is the main cause of death here. Many drowning victims were walking or climbing near rivers and unexpectedly fell in.

The Park Service works to reduce risks, but your safety is in your own hands. Keep alert. Read warnings and ask a ranger for advice.

# Be Safe!

**DROWNING:** is the #1 cause of death in national parks! Be extra careful along rivers and streams; falling in is as dangerous as swimming. Once in a river, getting out can be nearly impossible. Rocks are smooth and slippery; swift, cold water rapidly saps your strength.

**PLAGUE:** Please do not feed or touch ANY park animals. Fleas on rodents can carry plague. Deer mice feces can carry hantavirus.

**POISON OAK:** This common shrub grows up to 5000 feet elevation: Red leaves with whitish berries in fall, bare in winter; shiny green leaves in groups of three in spring. If you touch any part of the plant, wash skin and clothes right away.



**TICKS:** Common in foothill and Kings Canyon grasses; check yourself after a walk. Their bite is painless, but a small percentage carry Lyme disease. Remove them carefully with tweezers; seek a doctor's advice.

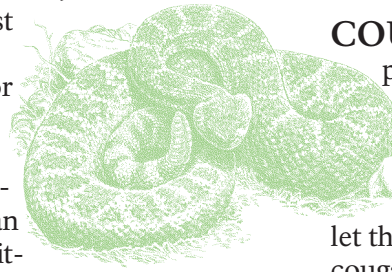


**GIARDIA** in lakes and streams can cause intestinal upset. Iodine and other chemicals may not be as reliable as heat in killing bacteria and Giardia, but can be effective if used properly. Boil drinking water at least 3 minutes.

**HYPOTHERMIA:** This life-threatening condition can occur year-round. Stay dry and snack often. If others don't respond to the need for warmer clothes or are stumbling, forgetful, or extremely tired and drowsy, get warm sugary drinks into them immediately. Get them into dry clothing, sleeping bags, and shelter.

**RATTLESNAKES** are especially common in the foothills. Watch where you put your hands and feet! They are protected; do not kill them. Most bites result from teasing or handling.

Very few people die, but tissue damage can be severe. If bitten, avoid panic; call a ranger or 911.



**LIGHTNING:** If you see dark clouds or lightning or hear thunder, get inside a large building or a vehicle (not convertible), if possible. Do not stand under trees or in shallow caves. Avoid projecting above the surrounding landscape such as standing on a ridge, on Moro Rock, or in open meadows. Stay away from open water, wire fences, and metal railings, which can carry lightning from a distance.

**WEST NILE VIRUS** is passed by bites from infected mosquitos. Human illness is not common, but take steps to avoid mosquito bites.

**CARBON MONOXIDE:** This odorless, colorless gas can be fatal. Never burn charcoal in closed spaces such as a tent, camper, or RV.

**OZONE POLLUTION:** See air-quality index forecasts in visitor centers. Most ozone rises into the Sierra on warm winds. Levels of this colorless gas are highest May to October, peaking in late afternoon. These peaks sometimes reach "unhealthy" state and federal standards and can affect respiratory systems. Ozone forms from gases in car and factory exhaust.

**CELL PHONES** rarely work well in these mountains; don't rely on them. Note where pay telephones are available (see pages 8 & 9).

**COUGARS** roam throughout the parks, but chances of seeing one are very small. They rarely attack people and pets, but be aware. Avoid hiking alone. Watch children closely; never let them run ahead. If you see a cougar, the goal is to convince it that you are not prey and may be dangerous to it:

- Don't run. Cougars associate running with prey and give chase.
- Try to appear as large as possible. Don't crouch or try to hide.
- Hold your ground or back away slowly while facing the lion.
- Pick up children.
- If the lion acts aggressively, wave your hands, shout, and throw stones or sticks at it.
- If attacked, fight back!
- Report any cougar sightings.

**EXPLORE SAFELY:** Avoid going alone. Tell someone your plans and return time. Beware of uneven or slippery surfaces. Wear sunglasses and sunscreen. Share roads and trails with people and wildlife.

**SAFE DRINKING WATER:** The parks' 13 water systems are tested to ensure that they meet state and federal standards. Annual Consumer Confidence Reports are available at visitor centers.

### OPERATION NO-GROW

• Prevent illegal marijuana growing! Keep your parks safe, natural, and free from illegal activities! Report suspicious activities to 1-888-NPS-CRIME.

- Panoramic Point Road closes with first snow. No trailers or motorhomes.
- Redwood Mountain Road is unpaved. Not plowed.
- Big Meadows, Quail Flat/ Ten Mile, Converse Basin (FS): All or partially unpaved. Close with snow.

#### IN SEQUOIA –

- Crystal Cave Road closes late October to mid-May.
- Mineral King Road reopens 5/23/08 (snow permitting).
- Moro Rock/Crescent Meadow Road closes with first snows. Reopens with spring melt.
- South Fork Road is partially unpaved. Slippery when wet.
- Road to Middle Fork Trail is unpaved; slippery when wet. Once closed for winter, park at Hospital Rock Picnic Area.

**LET OTHERS PASS BUT STAY ON PAVEMENT**  
Slower vehicles *must* use paved turnouts to let traffic pass. Park and drive only on pavement to protect plants and soils and to avoid fires.

## Road rules

### GO SLOW FOR WILDLIFE!

#### EXPECT ICY ROADS

**SLOW DOWN.** Sudden speed or stopping causes skids. Allow six seconds of stopping distance between cars. Check antifreeze, battery, wipers, chains and road conditions before you come: 24-hour recorded information 1-559-565-3341 (press 9, then 4). Motorcycles: avoid oil buildup in center of lanes.

#### ALWAYS CARRY CHAINS

that fit your tires, and obey signs to use them. Buy or rent chains outside the parks. Snow tires are often required. Most cars have them; check the side of the tire for M/S, M+S, or a snowflake.

#### GET SNOW OFF CAR ROOFS

It slides onto the windshield and blocks the driver's vision.

#### DON'T LOSE YOUR BRAKES

Always downshift going downhill. In automatic cars, put the

gearshift on 1, 2 or L.

#### SNOWPLOWS RULE

Plows may operate day & night, moving with or against traffic. If you see one, slow down but don't stop. Watch for signals from the plow operator.

#### EMERGENCY CAR REPAIRS

For a tow: 565-3341 then press zero (24 hours). In Sequoia Park only, AAA is available for out-of-gas, lock outs, minor repairs, jump starts: 565-4070 (24 hours).

#### FILL YOUR GAS TANK FIRST

No gas stations lie within the park; only Grant Grove Market sells cans of emergency gas. Fill up in nearby Three Rivers, Clingan's Junction, or the National Forest's Hume Lake (1-559-335-2000) year-round 24 hours with credit card: 11 miles (18 km) north of Grant Grove via Hwy 180.

#### BICYCLES

Ride only on roads (not trails), single file, with traffic, and wear light colors after dark.

People under 18 must wear a helmet.

#### LENGTH ADVISORY

On 12 narrow miles from Potwisha Campground to Giant Forest Museum in Sequoia Park, advised maximum vehicle length is 22 feet (6.7m). Maximum limit on the Generals Highway is 40 feet (12m) for single vehicles, 50 feet (15m) for vehicles plus a towed unit. Alternatives: Hwy 180 from Fresno is straighter, less steep, and wider. If towing a car, camp in the foothills and use the car to explore.

#### WINTER ROAD CLOSURES

IN KINGS CANYON PARK & NATIONAL FOREST/MONUMENT –

- Generals Highway (main park road) closes for plowing between Wuksachi & Grant Grove during & after storms. Depending on snowfall, closure may be brief or last for weeks.
- Highway 180 to Cedar Grove closes mid-November to mid-April.